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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000240

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY LEW'S MARCH 31, 2009 CONVERSATION  
WITH CHINESE V/FM WU

Classified By: Classified by: Kenneth H. Merten, Deputy Executive Secretary, S/ES, Department of State. Reason 1.4.(d)

11. (U) March 31, 2009; 3:30 p.m.; The Hague, Netherlands.

12. (U) Participants:

U.S.  
Deputy Secretary Jacob Lew  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Central Asia David Sedney  
Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary Piper Campbell  
Daniel King (Embassy Notetaker)

China  
V/FM Dawei Wu  
Deputy DG Weidong Sun  
Counsellor Kang Lu  
Deputy Director Jian Wang

13. (U) SUMMARY. Vice Minister Wu expressed concerns to the Deputy Secretary about the impact of Afghanistan security and politics on reconstruction efforts. The Deputy Secretary and Wu reviewed opportunities for cooperation in the areas of reforestation and environmental protection. The Deputy Secretary also urged China to attend, and make a pledge at, the Tokyo conference on Pakistan. END SUMMARY.

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Afghanistan Reconstruction: China,s Security Concerns  
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14. (C) The two leaders met on the margins of the March 31 Dutch-Afghan-UN conference on Afghanistan in The Hague ("International Conference on Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Strategy in a Regional Context"). Wu repeatedly raised concerns about security in Afghanistan. Because of the instability in Afghanistan, reconstruction efforts are being hindered. Improvements to security are a precondition for political stability and economic development.

15. (C) The Deputy Secretary acknowledged concerns about security and said that one element of the strategic review was a decision by the U.S. to focus attention in southern and eastern Afghanistan where security concerns are greatest. The United States has made training of the Afghanistan police and army a priority, but ultimately the Afghans will need to be responsible for their own security. The U.S. strategy is to focus its Afghanistan aid on areas where we have expertise, such as various development sectors and military training. We are encouraging other countries also to focus on their areas of expertise; various European countries, for example, may be able to augment attention to national police training. If the U.S. and China can cooperate on Afghanistan reconstruction efforts, we can cooperate in other areas as well.

¶6. (C) Wu concurred and noted that China plans to participate in the upcoming Pakistan Donors Conference in Tokyo. He said that he hopes that there will be opportunities for bilats at the conference and that China will participate at a senior level. Wu cautioned, however, that Pakistan and Afghanistan should be treated as two separate countries and their individual sovereignties must be respected. While he said that China supports the focus brought by the U.S. strategic review, he implied that China would have welcomed additional information before the review was released. Lew noted this event was an opportunity for such consultation and highlighted our efforts to engage with China and other countries in the margins of the Dutch-sponsored conference.

¶7. (C) Wu pressed the Deputy Secretary on whether Afghanistan President Karzai would win re-election, noting for the importance of the Afghan people electing a capable leader. The Deputy Secretary responded that the U.S. is pleased with the registration process and the steps taken by Afghan institutions to assure free and fair elections. He stated that the U.S. wants the next Afghan president, whether Qstated that the U.S. wants the next Afghan president, whether it is Karzai or someone else, to be a solid leader.

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Reforestation and Environmental Protection  
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¶8. (U) The Deputy Secretary identified reforestation as an opportunity for China to contribute to Afghanistan,s development. He noted the similarities in topography and climate between the two countries and cited China,s expertise in reforestation as beneficial to Afghanistan.

¶9. (C) The Deputy Secretary noted U.S. concerns that the Chinese company-led dam and copper mine projects have not advanced in Afghanistan. Wu responded that the dam has been finished, albeit with setbacks due to security problems, (Note: Lew or another senior official will follow up to point out unmet contractual obligations associated with Kajaki dam.) Wu said the Chinese company has begun work on the copper mine project, and China wants to do more in the North, if security allows. Wu noted that China is doing its best to strengthen Afghan capabilities and is helping train Afghan professionals.

¶10. (U) The Deputy Secretary noted that Afghanistan will face the same environmental impact challenge posed by rapid growth as does China. He queried China for any advice they could provide Afghanistan. Wu noted that the Chinese government has emphasized raising awareness about the environment but now must deal with environmental degradation. The two parties concluded by agreeing that there is much hard work ahead, but that this gathering of large, concerned countries in the Hague had resulted in a significant re-commitment to Afghanistan,s reconstruction.

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